



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

City of San Diego  
Planning & Development Review  
**Building Development Review**  
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## Building Newsletter 10-4

### Opening Protection at Exterior Stairways

Interpretations of State and Local Building Codes  
1998 California Building Code: Chapter 10  
Revision Date: July 1999

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#### I. Opening Protection at Exterior Stairways

In accordance with Section 1006.3.4.3 of the Building Code, all openings in the exterior wall below and within ten feet, measured horizontally, of an exterior exit stairway serving a building over two stories in height or a floor level having such openings in two or more floors below shall be protected by a fixed, self-closing or automatic-closing fire assembly having a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -hour fire-protection rating. Exterior stairways enclosed on more than two sides shall comply with the flame-spread requirements for interior stairways.

#### II. Exceptions

- A. Openings may be unprotected when two separated exterior stairways serve an exterior exit balcony.
- B. Openings around the corner from an exterior stairway need not be protected by a rated self-closing fire assembly if the plane of the wall in which they are located is a distance at least equal to the width of the stairway from the exterior stairway. See Figure 1 below.
- C. Note that Section 1006.3.4.3 does not apply to Group R, Division 3 Occupancies.

**Figure 1/**Opening protection at exterior stairs

